INNOCENCE LOST

IN THE AFTERMATH OF A HORRIFIC SCHOOL SHOOTING, BARACK OBAMA OFFERS 'LOVE AND PRAYERS OF A NATION' TO FAMILIES OF VICTIMS PAGE 5

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Medix School moving to city core

New home. Relocation will mean influx of students; matches up with city plans for redevelopment

MARK SPOWART
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A former Labatt office building on the cusp of downtown will soon be home to hundreds of students — a move that's expected to breathe new life into redevelopment for the core and neighbourhoods along Horton Street.

Medix School, soon to be known as Medix College, will relocate Jan. 2 to Richmond and Horton streets, leaving the Oxford Street strip mall it's called home for 20 years.

"We want to expand our lab areas and offer students improved resources and amenities; the present ones are not adequate," Medix director Gerry Slattery said about the move from Oxbury Mall. "We have been looking to expand into a standalone building for a couple of years now. It will give us better accessibility, better visibility and this place looked like a duck and sounded like a duck."

Medix cited the proposed redevelopment of SoHo and improvements along Horton Street as contributing factors.

By the numbers

400

Number of students at Medix year-round.

"Our first option wasn't downtown, but we researched the Labatt building and began to see it as a viable option," Slattery said.

The London Economic Development Corp. helped the school find its new home, surveying a number of sites.

"They wanted a full-scale look across the city, were specific in terms of transit; plus they needed to have their own parking where they didn't run into parking costs for their students," said Peter White, the LEDC's president and CEO.

"This is a great re-purposing of an existing building that gives them everything they need."

The city's plans to redevelop SoHo include building strong connections to downtown and the Thames River. A city council committee is expected to hear details Tuesday about a proposal to turn the London Hydro property — about a block from the new Medix site — into a mix of residential and commercial developments.

Medix provides training for a wide range of health care-related jobs, including dental assistants, pharmacy assistants and massage therapy.

Ali Soufan from York Development Group, left, and Gerry Slattery from Medix are pictured outside the school's new home at 303 Richmond St. Medix will move from an Oxford Street strip mall in January. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

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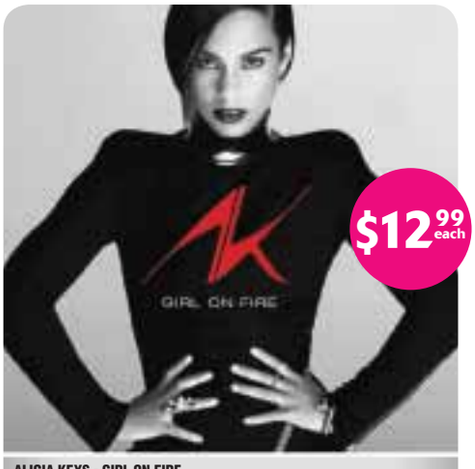

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TVDSB's mission updated

Ready for the future?
Reviews of measurable data expected to play bigger role in school board decisions

Thames Valley school trustees are changing their vision to reflect the new face of area schools and communities.

The board's mission statement update, approved last week, is the first since the London, Elgin, Oxford and Middlesex boards of education were combined to create Thames Valley in 1999.

"Many things have changed since then," board chair Joyce Bennett said.

Provincial legislation passed in 2009 requires that trustees have a governing strategy and review it every year.

The new mission for the board of trustees is: "We build each student's tomorrow, every day." The new vision statement reads: "The Thames Valley learning community inspires innovation, embraces diversity and celebrates achievements — a strong foundation for all students."

Under the new strategy, a greater emphasis will be placed on reviewing standardized-test scores, high school graduation numbers and teachers' practices.

Teachers, Bennett said, are expected to be given more flexibility and room for innovation in the way they deliver classroom lessons.

"Part of our job is to improve student achievement," Bennett said.

That means asking pointed questions, she said, including: "Are we preparing our students for the future they will face, are we being innovative enough to prepare them for the future?"

MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

At a glance

- To prepare a new strategy, TVDSB trustees had meetings across the district with parents, students and employees.
- The key messages trustees took away from those meetings were that students want more opportunities for their voices to be heard and parents place student safety and diversity at the top of the list, said Joyce Bennett, chair of the Thames Valley board of trustees.

Thames Valley board. Elementary teachers to strike Thursday

The Thames Valley school board's 138 elementary schools will be closed Thursday as teachers walk out of classrooms in protest of provincial legislation.

A notice about the closures was posted on the district's website Saturday, advising parents to arrange day care for their children. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, which is giving 72-hour notice of walkouts via its website, had not posted details about its Thames Valley plans on Sunday.

The city is offering $21 camp programs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday for children four to 12 years old at Stronach and Earl Nichols arenas. Day care will be available before and after camp for an additional charge. Visit london.ca/spectrum or call 519-661-5575 to register.

One-day walkouts started rippling across the province Dec. 10, with teachers leaving classes to man picket lines in front of schools.

Teachers are calling for the repeal of a law that allows the government to stop strikes, freeze wages and cut benefits. ETFO says the legislation violates collective-bargaining rights.

METRO

Teacher power

3,300

Number of Thames Valley elementary school teachers represented by Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Time to wake Old Man Winter

Mary Ann Ciosk, 21, of London, slides through water puddled on the Rotary Ice Rink Sunday at Covent Garden Market. Environment Canada's high for the day came in at 11 C, far above the seasonal norm of 0 C. With Christmas a little more than a week away, temperatures are expected to remain warm Monday and Tuesday. Highs will dip below freezing later in the week, according to Environment Canada's forecast.

MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Business Cares

Company gives up staff party to support food bank

A London communications firm took a new approach this year to pulling together a $500 donation for the Business Cares food drive.

Marketing Strategies & Solutions (433 William St.) spared the cost of postage by sending holiday e-cards this season and put money originally planned for a staff party toward the drive.

Company leaders are encouraging others to do the same in support of the London Food Bank fundraiser, which continues through Wednesday. Details are available at businesscares.ca. METRO

Joe-to-go

Coffee company lays plans to launch food truck

The folks at Fire Roasted Coffee (900 King St.) want to launch a food truck this summer, selling coffee, chocolate and cold drinks.

Leaders of the effort will outline their plans to a city committee on Monday. The truck, they say, would be stationed at predetermined locations downtown on weekdays and travel to special events on evenings and weekends.

According to a summary of the presentation, Fire Roasted wants to work with community partners, including Downtown London, to get more food trucks on city streets.

METRO

Victoria Park

Packed lineup planned for New Year's party

The city has announced the entertainment lineup for its annual New Year's Eve celebration at Victoria Park.

On the children's program, events will include a My Perfect Princess party and a performance by Cassandra Hodgins, fresh off a TV reality show contest where she earned the role of Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz. Skating will begin at 5 p.m.

Rock bands U-Turn and Spirit of the West will perform after 9 p.m.

A fireworks display is planned for midnight.

METRO

Perfect season no more. Oshawa powers down Lightning's streak

The London Lighting's perfect season came to end with a 105-101 Saturday home loss against the Oshawa Power.

The Lightning held a seven-point lead at the end of the first quarter, but went into halftime 12 points behind. The team rallied in the third, outscoring the Power 33-17, but fell short in the fourth.

Lightning forward Elvin Mims led the team in scoring with 21 compared to Oshawa team leader Nick Okorie's 38 points.

The Lightning were on an NBL record 11-game winning streak.

"We didn't play our style of basketball, but it's just one loss and if we let that determine our season, we don't stand a chance," Mims said.

"When you're on a streak like that you have a target on your back, and you have to approach every game as such.

"They played well tonight and out-hustled us."

METRO

The London Lightning's Morgan Lewis works his way around Oshawa's Papa Oppong during Saturday's game at Budweiser Gardens. CONTRIBUTED

Coming up

- The Lightning take the court next at 7 p.m. Thursday at Budweiser Gardens against the Windsor Express.

The London Knights' Ryan Rupert watches as his shot gets past Kingston Frontenac goalie Colin Furlong during the first period of Sunday's game at Budweiser Gardens. Rupert put two pucks in the net, extending the Knights' winning streak. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Red-hot Knights make it 21 straight

Four shy of current benchmark. Shootout victory pushes team closer to OHL record for consecutive wins

MARK SPOWART
london@metronews.ca

Seth Griffith scored twice, including the winner 3:13 into overtime, as the London Knights edged the visiting Kingston Frontenacs 6-5 Sunday.

The victory extends London's franchise-best win streak to 21 games, which is just four shy of the Ontario Hockey League record set by the 1983-84 Kitchener Rangers.

Ryan Rupert also scored twice for the Knights (29-5-2), who improved to 15-3-2 on home ice, while Chris Tierney had a goal and two assists.

Josh Anderson scored twice as Bo Horvat and Jacob Jammes each had two assists to round out London's offence.

Jake Patterson started in goal for London, but was replaced after allowing three goals on 19 shots through 23 minutes of action. Kevin Bailie stopped 7-of-9 shots in the final 42 minutes of relief to pick up the win while Kingston's Colin Furlong turned away 42-of-48 shots.

The Knights went 1 for 4 on the power play while the Frontenacs failed to score on either of their chances with the man advantage.

Sam Povoroznyuk had a goal and an assist for the Frontenacs (17-15-2), who have dropped back-to-back games, and Cody Alcock, Samuel Schutt, Slater Doggett and Jean Dupuy each scored once.

Coming up

- The London Knights are off for the holidays.
- The next game is 7 p.m. Dec. 27 at Budweiser Gardens against the Windsor Spitfires.

'Deplorable' conditions. Animals rescued from delivery truck downtown

Two people have been charged with five counts each of animal cruelty after dogs and cats were found abandoned downtown.

An investigation began Dec. 3 when animal welfare officials received a complaint of three dogs who weren't receiving adequate care. The family responsible for the animals had moved when officers visited the reported address.

A week later, the dogs and two cats were found in "deplorable" conditions inside a delivery truck that had been sitting in a downtown parking lot for several days.

Nearby residents were alerted to the animals when one of the dogs started honking the truck's horn.

Donna Hebert and Allan Folkins-Wyre were charged Thursday by the Ontario SPCA, police said.

The animals are being cared for by the London Humane Society. METRO

The charges

- Three counts of causing an animal to be in distress
- One count of failing to provide necessary care
- One count of failing to provide adequate and appropriate sanitary conditions

For more local news, visit metronews.ca

13 counts

Man charged with mischief for graffiti tags

London police have charged a 20-year-old with 13 counts of mischief under $5,000 for repeatedly tagging properties with graffiti.

Police say Taylor Parkinson allegedly used tags including "FRACTURE," "PIW" and "SECTR."

The damages is estimated to be more than $3,800.

Police have laid more than 200 graffiti-related criminal charges in the past two years. About $14,000 in restitution from vandals was put toward a mural program for areas plagued by graffiti.

METRO

City-owned London Hydro is headquartered at 111 Horton St. E. MARK SPOWART/FOR METRO

Recommendation. London Hydro on board with utility mergers

London Hydro says it's open to amalgamating with Hydro One or merging with a number of smaller, municipally-owned utilities.

The Ontario Distribution Sector Review Panel, commissioned by the province, has recommended a major shake-up in the way electricity is delivered. The panel says 80 power companies in the province should be merged into eight to 10 regional distributors within two years.

"London Hydro has advocated for a position of increased consolidation," Vinay Sharma, the utility's CEO, said. "We don't want to become very large like today's Hydro One, but we like the idea of growing to a reasonable size."

The NDP says the panel's advice would see more private involvement in power, causing rates to increase.

The opposite would be true, Sharma said.

"Nothing will change in the way we provide service and in the rates that are established," he said. "The rates are not going to go up just because of ownership or amalgamation. Rates rather will likely go down or not increase as (quickly)."

The Tories are backing the voluntary-merger proposal, but say municipalities should still have some say over operations.

AM980/AM980.CA

School massacre. Leftover ammo suggests an even deadlier plan: Police

The gunman in the Connecticut shooting rampage was carrying an arsenal of hundreds of rounds of especially deadly ammunition — enough to kill just about every student in the school if given enough time, authorities said Sunday, raising the chilling possibility that the bloodbath could have been far worse.

Adam Lanza shot himself in the head just as he heard police drawing near to the classroom where he was slaughtering helpless children but he had more ammunition at the ready in the form of multiple high-capacity clips, each capable of holding 30 bullets.

The disclosure on Sunday sent shudders throughout this picturesque community in the northeastern U.S., as grieving families sought to comfort each other during church services devoted to impossible questions, like that of a six-year-old girl who asked her mother: "The little children, are they with the angels?"

With so much grieving left to do, many of Newtown's 27,000 people wondered whether life could ever return to normal. And as the work week was set to begin, parents weighed whether to send their own children back to school.

Adam Lanza posing for a photo that appeared in the Newtown High School yearbook. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amid the confusion and sorrow, stories of heroism emerged, including an account of the principal Dawn Hochsprung, 47, and the school psychologist, Mary Sherlach, 56, rushing toward Lanza in an attempt to stop him. Both died.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No one harmed

Churchgoers flee after phone threat

Worshippers hurriedly left St. Rose of Lima Church Sunday when someone phoned in a threat.

The threat interrupted a crowded mass and touched off a large police response days after the worst massacre of school-age children in U.S. history.

Gunman Adam Lanza, his mother and eight of the child victims attended St. Rose of Lima.

The church hosted overflow crowds at all three morning masses Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More online

Read and see more about the Newton, Connecticut, school shooting at metronews.ca, including:

- Portraits of shooting victims show lives at their very start, ended in a hail of gunfire
- Gunman's father speaks of sympathy, heartbreak
- Many employees at Connecticut school being hailed as heroes in wake of deadly shooting

U.S. is failing to keep kids safe, Obama says

Grieving families. Trip to Connecticut is the president's fourth visit to a mourning city in the aftermath of a mass shooting

For U.S. President Barack Obama, it was another sorrowful visit to another grieving community full of broken hearts from unimaginable violence.

The spot this time was Newtown, Connecticut, where on Friday a man opened fire inside Sandy Hook Elementary School. The toll: 26 dead, including 20 boys and girls just six or seven years old.

A mournful Obama said Sunday that the nation is failing to keep its children safe, pledging that change must come after an elementary-school massacre left 20 children dead.

"What choice do we have?" Obama said. "Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard?"

In an interfaith vigil for the fallen at Newtown High School, in a moment of grief that spread around the world, Obama conceded that none of his words would match the sorrow. But he declared to the community of Newtown: "You are not alone."

The president planned a private meeting Sunday afternoon with families of the victims and with emergency personnel who responded to the shootings.

The massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary on Friday elicited horror around the world, soul-searching in the United States, fresh political debate about gun control and questions about the incomprehensible — what drove the suspect to act.

Just last summer, Obama went to Aurora, Colorado, to visit victims and families after a shooting spree at a movie theatre in the Denver suburb left 12 dead. He went to Tucson, Arizona, in January of last year after six people were killed and 13 were wounded, including then-Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, outside a grocery store.

Privately, Obama told Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy that Friday was the most difficult day of his presidency.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama greets Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy during his arrival at the start of an interfaith vigil for the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, Sunday, in Newtown, Conn. A gunman walked into the elementary school Friday and opened fire, killing 26 people. THE HARTFORD COURANT, STEPHEN DUNN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Preventative measures

Democrats call for gun restrictions

Democratic lawmakers said Sunday that military-style assault weapons should be banned and that a national commission should be established to examine mass shootings in the U.S.

The proposals were among the first to come from Congress in the wake of Friday's massacre in Newtown, Connecticut. Gun rights activists remained largely quiet on the issue, all but one declining to appear on the Sunday talk shows. Meanwhile, Democrats vowed action and said it was time to hear from voters — not gun lobbyists — on how to prevent the next shooting.

The president and Senate Democrats haven't pushed for new gun control measures since taking power in 2008. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Groups call for another vote in Egyptian referendum

Alleged violations. Ruling party accused of tampering with polling stations

Egyptian rights groups called Sunday for a repeat of the first round of the constitutional referendum, alleging the vote was marred by widespread violations. Islamists who back the disputed charter claimed they were in the lead with a majority of "yes" votes, though official results have not been announced.

Representatives of seven rights groups charged that there was insufficient supervision by judges in Saturday's vote in 10 of Egypt's 27 provinces and independent monitors were prevented from witnessing vote counts.

The representatives told a news conference that they had reports of individuals falsely identifying themselves as judges, of women prevented from voting and that members of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood were allowed inside polling stations. They also complained that some polling centres closed earlier than scheduled and that Christians were denied entry to polling stations.

The vote is the latest stage in a near two-year struggle over Egypt's identity since the ouster of longtime leader Hosni Mubarak in a popular uprising. The latest crisis over the Islamist-backed charter evolved into a fight — deadly at times — over whether Egypt should move toward a religious state under Morsi's Brotherhood and their ultraconservative Salafi allies, or one that retains secular traditions and an Islamic character. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Security

120,000

The number of army troops that were deployed to help police protect polling stations and state institutions.

A man walks near barbed wire set up by protesters in Tahrir Square, in Cairo, Sunday. Key Egyptians rights groups called for another vote of the first round of the constitutional referendum. AMR NABIL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Civil war. Iran proposes plans to end Syrian bloodshed, backs Assad

Iran is backing presidential elections in Syria as part of a six-point plan outlined Sunday to halt the 21-month civil war in Tehran's main Middle East ally.

The plan, described by state media and Iranian news agencies, also calls for efforts to halt the flow of weapons into Syria and to hold talks that include the government of Syrian president Bashar Assad.

Iran in the past has offered initiatives to end the Syrian bloodshed, but none are likely to gain any momentum with the main rebel forces that view Tehran as discredited by its close ties to Assad. On Saturday, Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said Iran would do all it could to keep Assad in power.

The latest proposals were offered during the opening of a two-day conference that includes 200 Syrian religious and political figures and envoys from countries including Syrian neighbours Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon, according to the semi-offical Fars news agency. Key Syrian rebel figures did not attend. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syrian President Bashar Assad
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Japan

Right-wing party wins election in landslide vote

Japan's conservative Liberal Democratic Party returned to power in a landslide election victory Sunday after three years in opposition, according to early returns, signalling a rightward shift in the government that could further heighten tensions with China, a key economic partner, as well as rival. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Headache

Clinton suffers a concussion

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sustained a concussion last week after becoming extremely dehydrated and fainting while suffering from a stomach virus, the State Department said.

The doctors did not determine it to be a severe concussion, the official said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Venezuela

Chavez recovers as country goes to the polls

Venezuelans were choosing governors and state lawmakers on Sunday in elections seen as a key test of whether President Hugo Chavez's movement can endure if the socialist leader leaves the political stage.

The vote was the first time in Chavez's nearly 14-year-old presidency that he has been unable to actively campaign.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gunfight

Taliban militants dead after airport raid

Pakistani security forces cornered the last members of a group of Taliban militants who staged a deadly raid on an airport in the country's troubled northwest, and all five died in the ensuing firefight Sunday, officials said.

Three were shot by the security forces and two others blew themselves up in the nearby village where they had holed up, the officials said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Pregnant princess. Kate attends first function since hospitalization

Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, on Sunday at a BBC awards program. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The pregnant Duchess of Cambridge made her first public appearance Sunday night since her hospitalization for acute morning sickness.

Looking healthy, the former Kate Middleton presented awards at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year prizes, which were broadcast throughout Britain. She wore a dark green outfit and seemed composed and comfortable, showing no signs of morning sickness.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ikea monkey. Darwin's owner files lawsuit for the return of her pet

The owner of Darwin, the monkey in a faux shearling coat who escaped at a north Toronto Ikea store, has filed a lawsuit to get her pet back.

Toronto Animal Services captured Darwin during the incident last Sunday and transferred him to a primate sanctuary in Sunderland. Yasmin Nakhuda's lawsuit names the sanctuary and alleges they have "unlawfully detained" the monkey. The suit also claims that officials only had the right to issue a ticket, not to seize the animal. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ontario man's bunker built for any doomsday

Bring it on. Whether for a disaster or a nuclear catastrophe, this man has been ready for 50 years

Bruce Beach shows off the living quarters in his underground bunker in Horning's Mills, Ont. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Don't talk to Bruce Beach about doomsday. He's been preparing for impending disaster for a half-century and has seen apocalyptic agitation come and go, like so many fads.

So forgive him for not panicking over the end of the Mayan calendar on Dec. 21, this coming Friday.

The 78-year-old former high school teacher, who has a huge nuclear bunker in Ontario, built his first shelter for the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960s.

He was prepared to go underground for the Y2K crisis, amid widespread concern that computer glitches might bring down airplanes in 2000. He received lots of calls from people seeking shelter during the 1982 Falklands War. But his busiest day was Sept. 11, 2001, when his website was bombarded with 85,000 hits within three hours.

People regularly drop in to seek refuge in the shelter he built in the 1980s, named the Ark Two, which is comprised of 42 buried school buses.

His most recent visit was three weeks ago.

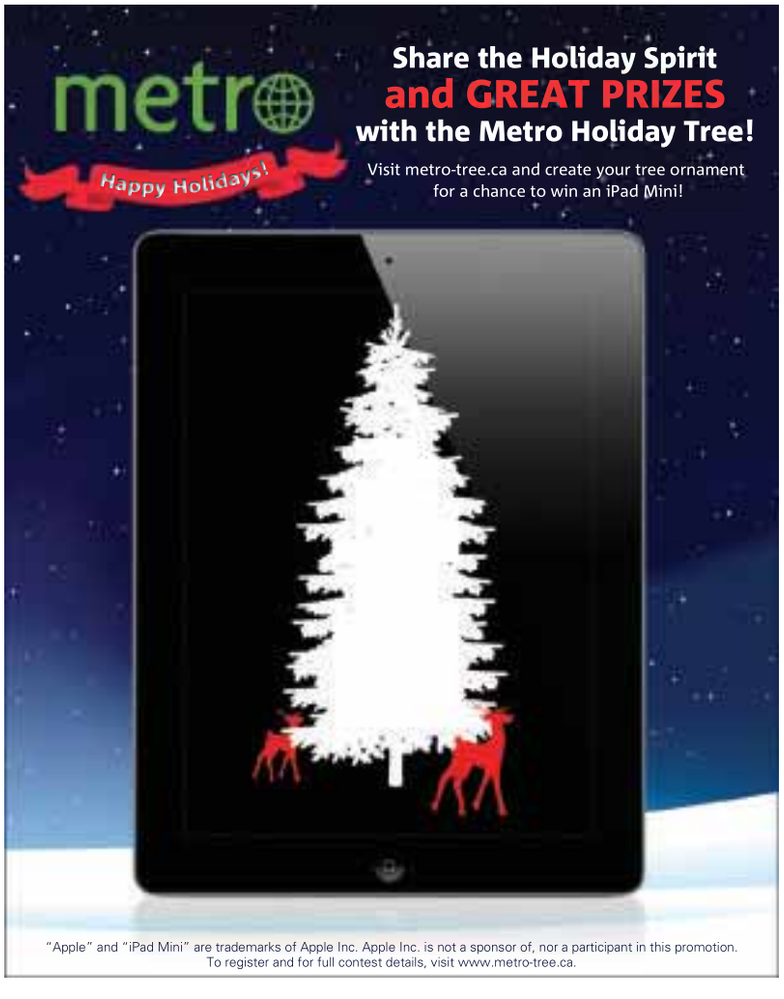
The labyrinth, with its kitchens, showers and separate bunk rooms for children and adults, is about 90 kilometres northwest of Toronto, in Horning's Mills.

"People have been in a panic because someone has prophesied the end of the world this particular week or whatever," Beach said in a phone interview from his home.

"They call us up just to make sure we have space in the shelter and I tell them, 'For sure, come on down.'"

Beach's main concern has always been the threat of nuclear attacks, which he fears are even closer than ever because of Middle East conflicts and Iran's weapons program.

Beach says the most troubling news as of late has come from the North Koreans — not the Mayans. THE CANADIAN PRESS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Avoiding the pitfalls of ebook self-publishing

Going it alone. Here are five tips to help you get in on the ebook explosion in 2013

In 2012, Douglas & McIntyre filed for bankruptcy protection, Random House of Canada become the sole owner of McClelland & Stewart, and Penguin and Random House planned to merge.

It's perhaps no surprise that year also saw an explosion in online self-publishing, with a wealth of platforms — including Kobo Writing Life, Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing and iBooks Author — offering authors an alternate avenue.

"We're actually hearing from a lot of different types of authors, some brand new and some successful ... that have had traditional contracts that are just using self-publishing to experiment with new stuff or put books out that they wanted to do on a different cycle than their traditional publishers were," says Libby Johnson McKee, director of Kindle Direct Publishing.

If you have dreams of being a self-publishing sensation in 2013, here are tips on how to stand out in an increasingly crowded market:

From left, a Kobo eReader Touch, an Amazon Kindle, an Aluratek Libre Air and a Barnes & Noble Nook are displayed. Platforms that offer authors an alternate way to get published — including Kobo Writing Life, Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing and iBooks Author — have led to a boom in self-publishing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Quoted

"(Authors) finish their book and they think: 'Oh, I'll put it on Amazon and boom, people will start buying it,' and they will find that is absolutely not true."

Author Guy Kawasaki, who has written a book on self-publishing

1 **The moment you start writing the book, begin building your marketing platform.**

"The hardest thing about self-publishing is marketing, not writing, and people find this out too late," says California-based author Guy Kawasaki, who has self-published two books and explains how to do so in the newly released APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur — How to Publish Your Book.

Kawasaki recommends spending two to three hours a day on writing, and one hour a day building a marketing platform on social media sites such as Google Plus, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

2 **It sounds simple but —write a great book (and know your audience).**

"Bad books just don't sell," says Johnson McKee. "And if you write a great book and really work hard on getting your message right, the craft of writing is still the thing that wins the day."

Browse blogs of authors in the same genre and understand what fans like to read.

3 **Once the book is written, start crowdsourcing. Get fans, friends, colleagues and others to copy edit and/or review the book.**

"Do this immediately before it goes on sale, so that as soon as it goes on sale you have a bunch of great reviews for the book," says Kawasaki (he sent APE in full format to about 1,000 people before he self-published it, and just three days after it went on sale it had about 135 online reviews).

"Proofreading and editing, though, is a skill and it's something that, just because you write, you might not be able to be the best editor," cautions Johnson McKee. "So if you can find somebody who has that skill and it actually is pretty affordable ... I would recommend trying to do that."

4 **Lure in readers by putting your work on various sites and devices. And create catchy metadata, which includes the cover, title, description, biography, and price.**

"People judge a book by its cover, they do, so I would strongly recommend that authors consider using a professional cover designer and investing the time and effort in that," says Mark Lefebvre, director of self-publishing and author relations at Kobo. As with an ebook's text, the cover can also be changed once it's out in digital format.

5 **Write another great book as soon as possible. Lefebvre notes that passionate and dedicated readers will whip through a book and immediately check to see if authors have written anything else.**

This rule is particularly important for genre writers, adds Johnson McKee. "Those types of readers are voracious," she says. "I heard some statistic that romance readers can read 10 books a week, and those are people who are just waiting for the next book to come out."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Protesting the privatization of health care

A man holds a dummy depicting a health worker during a demonstration Sunday in Madrid, Spain, against cuts to public health care and the privatization of medical centres and hospitals. In Madrid, doctors have already staged 16 days of strikes and health workers' unions are calling for a third 48-hour strike on Dec. 19 and 20. Around 4,000 operations have been suspended in the city since the medical strikes started. PABLO BLAZQUEZ DOMINGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. economy

Economic data, fiscal cliff colour year-end trading

Talks aimed at avoiding the so-called fiscal cliff in the U.S. will keep casting a shadow over trading this week as markets begin to wind down for the holidays.

But traders will have key economic data to serve as a possible distraction, including the latest reading on Canadian economic growth and retail sales. And in the U.S., investors will look to see if the strong run-up in housing starts carried on into November.

Going over the cliff involves the automatic imposition of hundreds of billions of dollars in spending cuts and tax increases that could put the U.S. economy back into recession.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nepal

Farmers destroy KFC-imported chicken

Poultry farmers in Nepal have stopped trucks importing chicken from India for KFC restaurants and destroyed the cargo.

Nepal has banned chicken from India since bird flu broke out in India four years ago. Chief government administrator of Dhading district Bed Prasad Kharel says farmers stopped and seized two trucks bringing the frozen chicken to Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, on Saturday.

KFC, the only Western fast-food restaurant in Nepal, says it imports its chicken from Brazil. Kharel says the tags on the cargo showed it came from India.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ottawa. Can Tory language fix NDP's fiscal reputation?

Tom Mulcair boasts that he often sounds more like a conservative than Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

It may seem an odd thing for the leader of a social democratic party to brag about. But for the NDP leader, it's part of his mission to prove to Canadians that New Democrats aren't the wild-eyed, reckless taxers and spenders of lore.

Indeed, he maintains that's a more apt description of Harper's Conservatives, whom he accuses of racking up a huge environmental, economic and social debt that future generations will have to pay off.

"What's a paradox ... is that these are essentially conservative themes that I'm evoking in the sense that it would be very conservative to say, 'Don't look for a handout, be self-reliant, pull yourself up by your bootstraps,' all that sort of stuff," Mulcair said in a year-end interview with The Canadian Press.

"But what the Conservatives are doing is living off the credit card of our grandchildren ... and I think that's wrong."

Mulcair still emphasizes traditional NDP issues: sustainable development and the need to reduce social inequalities. But he's framing them in conservative language, essentially arguing that intergenerational equity requires the current generation to carry its own weight.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"What's a paradox ... is that these are essentially conservative themes that I'm evoking."

Federal NDP Leader Tom Mulcair

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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FIND NICHE IN VOLUNTEERING

URBAN COMPASS
Todd Devlin
london@metronews.ca

As a GenNext workplace ambassador, Stephanie Griffith has been plenty active with the United Way this year, supporting a number of initiatives.

None resonated more with the young professional than this month's Tweets for Toys drive.

The aim of the short campaign was providing toys for children in London families experiencing a recent job loss.

"My father lost his job when I was a teenager, and I can remember what that Christmas was like," said Griffith, who along with Jeff Dokter co-ordinated the involvement of their employer, accounting firm Famme & Co. "It broke my heart to think that such young kids would have to experience that."

Word of the toy drive spread across Twitter to the roughly 400 GenNext members, and within days enough gifts had been donated to make the holidays a bit brighter for a handful of families.

"The response from our staff was amazing," Griffith said. "It was great to see a small firm come together on such short notice to help out our community."

It was this year's second Christmas activity organized by GenNext, a committee within the United Way of London & Middlesex that encourages 20- and 30-somethings to get involved through volunteering, giving and advocacy.

Earlier this month, the group held its fifth "pop-up volunteering" event — this time helping Big Brothers Big Sisters of London and Area raise money for their children's mentoring programs by wrapping gifts at Masonville Place.

Pop-up volunteering, started last spring, has really taken off for GenNext. It offers young professionals opportunities to give their time and support a non-profit organization in the community.

Along with Big Brothers Big Sisters, GenNext has popped up to help WOTCH Community Mental Health Services and LUSO Community Services, with volunteers serving breakfast to youth involved in the Books and Breakfast program.

Each event is announced a few weeks in advance and usually consists of up to 20 volunteers.

"We call it pop-up volunteering because it's like a pop-up store or a pop-up sale ... you never know what the next one will be," said Sara Middleton, GenNext's community mobilizer. "That variety and not being predictable is what's characteristic about it."

Like the recent toy drive, ideas for pop-up events often come from volunteers themselves.

"They'll say, 'I'm really interested in this issue' or 'I'm interested in what's happening at this agency,'" Middleton said. "So then we try and design something that will meet that need."

The next event, which will focus on family literacy, is planned for February.

Griffith said she's looking forward to continuing the work.

"Giving back to your community is your way of showing how appreciative you are," she said. "In some way, be it directly or indirectly, your community has given something to you. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to give something back."

For more information, visit gennextuw.ca.

Members of GenNext wrap gifts at Masonville Place earlier this month during a "pop-up volunteering" event to help Big Brothers and Big Sisters of London and Area. CONTRIBUTED

How much is the doggie made of chains?

NIRIT LEVAV PACKER/REX FEATURES

Recycled animal art

Bicycle chains get upcycled into art

An artist has created a series of incredibly detailed life-size dog sculptures made entirely from bicycle parts.

Israeli-born Nirit Levav Packer's collection includes a full-size greyhound, cocker spaniels and other mutts constructed from recycled bike chains, gears, pedals and even bike seats.

METRO

Element of surprise

Metal mutts are not as tough as they look

At the beginning, Packer was pleasantly surprised that her creations weren't as fierce and hard as the chains of metal imply.

"The first dog I made was a Rottweiler, thinking that the rough edges of the broken metal pieces would loan to the dog's tough persona," she said. "But instead I was surprised to have created a sculpture that was more friendly and cute than intimidating." METRO

Emotional representation

Innermost thoughts shown through dog

In describing her artwork, Packer defines it as, "excitement, curiosity and fun."

"For me, this art is a reflection of my own emotions," Packer said.

"It's a representation of my thoughts from inside out. I love to weld metal and these chains are not heavy, surprisingly soft and flexible. Out of all the materials I use — keys, nails, watches — metal is my favourite."

METRO

Artist's viewpoint

"The biggest challenge for me in this art is to capture the expressions that a real dog would typically make. Thankfully, this type of metal is very flexible."

Nirit Levav Packer, 49, from Tel Aviv

Metropolitan Panel

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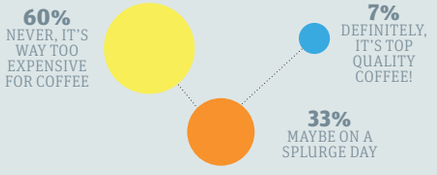

Twitter

@tresposh:
Just realized it has been 16 days since I had a day off. #workaholic #shoes #exams #cosmetics #basketball

@alex_vaiay:
People who smoke in bus shelters on rainy days should be denied the right to use the bus. #ldnont

@nourtaher8:
The fact that I can find a spot at #weldon at noon worries me .. where is everyone? #WesternU #Finals

@liamrtbrown:
I didn't get a Christmas card from Chakma and I feel really left out :(#WesternU

@jkhaps:
#WesternU should provide complimentary massages in order to deal with the stress of exams. #feelinglikeanoldperson #KhaperForPres

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Leslie Mann stars in This is 40, a movie directed by her husband, Judd Apatow. HANDOUT

Keeping it all in the family

This is 40. Leslie Mann talks about working with her children on movies directed by her husband and what middle age is like

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

Leslie Mann has made quite the career in husband Judd Apatow's movies, playing characters not too different from herself in Knocked Up, Funny People and now This is 40. In fact, much of the squabbling between Mann's Debbie and Paul Rudd's Pete in This is 40 was cultivated at home, making the film a kind of marriage counselling for the parents of two.

"It's like what I would fantasize about saying to Judd," Mann explains. "Like Debbie can say these things to Pete, but Leslie can't really say these things to Judd. It's fun to have this character to live through."

The film also gives Mann another chance to act alongside daughters Maude and Iris. (Like in Knocked Up, Mann and Apatow's real-life daughters co-star as Mann's character's kids.) But there can be trouble when her older daughter tries to take her work home with her, Mann admits.

"It's fun for Maude because we don't allow her to curse at home. I know she does at school," she says. "So it was fun for her to be able to do that at work, which I didn't think was a great idea, but Judd thinks is funny. So that's fun for her. But then she gets home from work and she tries to say the F-word or whatever and we have to shut her down."

Even with Apatow's brand of bold, uncomfortable comedy, Mann says she's game for anything. Of course, she had to draw the line somewhere, but that point has nothing to do with humorous or embarrassing situations.

"The only thing that made me feel uncomfortable in this movie is a scene with Iris when I'm laying in bed with her because it felt a little invasive," Mann admits. "I don't know why, because I can do anything else, but that for some reason felt a little like it was crossing some boundary. Just because everyone was sitting there watching me with my little girl doing what I do with my little girl, and I didn't like that."

As for life after 40, the actress — who hit the milestone herself last March — has found it to be a mixed bag.

"I think every day is different. Some days I feel fine and other days I feel like crying all day," she says. "I have lunches with my girlfriends who just turned 40, and some of those lunches we're crying and screaming about our husbands and saying we want to leave them and run away, and then other lunches we're fine and love our husbands and are happy with our lives."

One thing is for sure, though: A sequel about turning 50 would likely be darker.

"I keep asking women who are a little bit older when is this going to pass, and they're like, 'It doesn't pass. It just gets worse,'" Mann says.

A little on Brooks

Albert Brooks on being a parent in Hollywood

- **Dad.** Albert Brooks, who plays Paul Rudd's leech of a dad in This is 40, knows that it can be uniquely difficult to be a parent in Hollywood — especially around awards season. "I've got kids who are 14 and 12, and you try to keep them from going to the actual movies when they go to the movie theatre, but then you let them watch screeners. So we all gathered around and watched Flight, and it prompted a discussion of cocaine that I never wanted to have."

Vancouver-born actress' disarming' role

STEPHEN ERAMO
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She recently portrayed Gwen Eaton, a campaign adviser with a bone to pick with her secret lover in the critically lauded murder mystery The Killing. Now, Vancouver-born actress Kristin Lehman is taking on the lead role in CTV's new police procedural drama Motive.

Described as "feisty, sexy and disarming," her character of Angie Flynn is a divorced single mom and homicide detective who investigates cases that are told from the perspective of the killer as well as victim. This particular job came along at the ideal time for Lehman.

"I was very lucky to have done The Killing, and when we wrapped last April, I wanted to do more equally creatively satisfying work," notes the actress. "I also wanted to stay in Vancouver, largely because my little boy is in pre-school here and we really built our family's life around being in town for the series.

"So when I heard that Motive was a CTV show I was really excited about the possibility of doing another Canadian series. Then I read the material and fell in love with it. So I auditioned and, like every audition, I was convinced it wasn't what they [the producers] wanted," she jokes, "but happily it was what they wanted and here I am."

Despite being very different from her character, the actress felt an immediate bond with Angie.

"It's just an absolute delight to step into her shoes," says Lehman. "Angie 'lives' in me quite naturally, and thanks to our writers I get to delve into the complexities of what it must be like to have such a difficult job as well as be impulsive, instinctive, say what you feel and make mistakes."

At the time of this interview, Lehman and the rest of the Motive cast and crew were slightly over halfway through filming the show's first season.

"Aidan Devine guest-stars in this episode and he is an acting powerhouse," praises the actress. "I suppose I'm enjoying this one, in particular, because Angie has a really strong connection with the main protagonist. She decides to go against her superiors' wishes and follow her own hunches, so Aidan and I have gone toe-to-toe with some pretty intense and heavy scenes.

"At the end of the day you feel proud of all the effort you've put in as well as having worked opposite and shared a lot of mutual respect with another actor who processes the same way you do."

Kristin Lehman is taking on the lead role in Motive. HANDOUT

7 Outstanding TV shows of 2012

What was TV like in 2012? As with every year, it was a mix of the ridiculous and the sublime, the sacred and the profane. Excellence persevered with series such as HBO's Boardwalk Empire and Treme, AMC's Mad Men and, of course, AMC's The Walking Dead with its icky charm. Bottom line: It's not easy to narrow down a Top 7 anything for TV. Still, once this year's thousands of hours are assessed, some notable achievements emerge, for better or worse.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 Smash

This NBC musical drama put a bright, sexy sheen on one of filmdom's most timeless tropes: Hey, kids, let's put on a show! Which Smash did, embedding songs and dance into the story of how a Broadway musical comes to life. Sure, Smash took knocks for unbelievable plotlines, cardboard characters and trite show tunes. It gave new life to the term "hate-watch" (that act of watching something solely to delight in its awfulness). So what? With a show-must-go-on defiance emblematic of Broadway, Smash never flagged in its unique charm and meticulous artistry. And if anything about it seemed over-the-top, its naysayers should consider the recent cockamamie real-life fraud that sank the Broadway musical Rebecca.

2 Fox & Friends

We could easily salute shows that keep us laughing like The Daily Show With Jon Stewart, The Colbert Report, Saturday Night Live and Real Time with Bill Maher. But maybe we could more appropriately single out one obvious wellspring for those shows' humour. I'm referring, of course, to Fox & Friends. With their three-part harmony, co-hosts Steve Doocy, Gretchen Carlson and Brian Kilmeade offer up a unique brand of jovially partisan delivery. Theirs is a seamless, finish-one-another's-sentence knack for issuing the network-designated messages as news. Contrary viewpoints are admissible only to be mocked. But mostly cheerful unity prevails, a tidy single-minded package of riffs as predictable as the tides — but as amusing as any deliberate caricature. Let's give credit where it's due: These Friends cry out to be spoofed.

3 Girls

Lena Dunham this, Lena Dunham that. Blah, blah, blah. She, in her mid-20s, created, wrote, directed, produced and starred in a half-hour comedy series about 20-something adulthood, femininity and sexuality. She sparked adulation, conversation, arguments and green-eyed envy of her talent. Girls was a series that couldn't be ignored — at least, by pop-culture cognoscenti. It will surely be welcomed back in January with even more attention, if possible (with always the threat of a backlash), as viewers resume arguing: Does the series measure up to all the hype? Nuff said. Up to now, indisputably, Girls has been monumental. And a gas.

4 Here Comes Honey Boo Boo and Killer Karaoke

Two new reality shows blazed new trails of idiocy. One capitalized on redneck stereotypes and a six-year-old beauty pageant veteran. The other invited contestants to sing their hearts out while being zapped with electricity or dunked in a vat of snakes. In a TV universe swamped with reality shows, these two stood apart as groundbreaking, inspired and dismaying — if for no other reason than they served as a reminder that each is merely a way station en route to the next extreme in outrageous crassness.

5 Key & Peele

The biracial status of comedy partners Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele (black fathers, white mothers) is notable only because it gives them unique insight sizing up the human condition. And they made the most of that insight on their sketch-and-standup half-hour series. In particular, they scored with Peele in an unsurpassed impersonation of Obama where the unflappable president is joined by Key as "anger translator" Luther, who demonstrates, comically unfiltered, what Obama really thinks. But whatever they did, the humour of Key and Peele proved fresh and smart.

6 Sons of Anarchy

Tough guys on motorcycles selling guns and drugs. Tough women keeping them in line, or trying to. Rival gangs, corrupt cops and a club membership in turmoil. Jax (Charlie Hunnam), his mother, Gemma (Katey Sagal), and her husband, Clay (Ron Perlman), were the core of a series that, in its fifth season, raged wilder than ever. A family drama set in a hard-hitting workplace, Sons was bloodthirsty and brilliant like nothing else on TV. Its audience knew what its characters found out: there was no escaping its excitement.

7 Homeland

In its second season, this series remained suspenseful, disturbing and riddled with surprises. It mined drama from possibly the most damaged pair of protagonists, opponents and star-crossed lovers in TV history. Marine Sgt. Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis) was a prisoner of war in Afghanistan who had returned home a national hero and soon-to-be-elected U.S. Congressman — and, covertly, a terrorist turncoat. Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes) was a former CIA agent suffering from a bipolar disorder as well as emotional ties to the man she was obsessed with bringing down. They could have titled this series Homeland Insecurity.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

L.A. Reid axed from X Factor

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Considering Demi Lovato and Simon Cowell's contentious behaviour and crazy-side-eyes on this season of The X Factor, it comes as some surprise that it's L.A. Reid who is the first casualty on the judge's panel. The stylishly-dressed music executive will not be coming back next season for the reality TV show.

"I have the utmost respect for Simon Cowell," Reid said Thursday in a statement. Reid claims he is going back to his job of running the Epic music label. "He is the very best, and I have had the opportunity to learn so much from him. Working with him on X Factor has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I'm honoured to have sat on the panel with such incredible talent. Of course, I will miss the show," Reid added. "In my opinion, Simon attracts the best talent, but I'm looking forward to getting back to my core business and the responsibility of running Epic Records."

Season 3 already has the go-ahead by Fox, but there's still no word on if Cowell's co-judges — Demi Lovato and Britney Spears — will be back.

Hugh Grant ALL IMAGES GETTY

Jon Stewart dubs Grant worst Daily Show guest

Jon Stewart recently revealed that Hugh Grant was the worst guest he'd ever had on The Daily Show and he would "never" be invited back, saying at the Montclair Film Festival last week that Grant was "giving everyones— the whole time. He's a big pain in the ass." Well, Grant got the message, posting to Twitter, "Turns out my inner crab got the better of me with TV producer in '09. Unforgivable. J. Stewart correct to give me kicking."

Twitter

@jtimberlake
Seriously.... The whole Lower East Side of NY looks like Invasion Of The Drunken Santas! I'm not missing out on this next year...

@ElizabethHurley
Hate untangling Xmas lights ...

Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart

No awkward U.K. Xmas ahead as Stewart and Pattinson opt for L.A.

Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart will reportedly be spending the holidays together in Los Angeles, ditching an earlier plan to visit Pattinson's family in the U.K. for Christmas, according to E! News. It appears the earlier plan would've led to no small amount of awkwardness, as the Pattinson clan is reportedly still cross with Stewart over her summer cheating scandal. But the reconciled lovers are said to be in such a hurry to celebrate the holidays together that Stewart left the premiere party for On the Road in New York early to get back to California. "The couple will spend Christmas and New Year's together until he leaves on Jan. 8 to start filming his next project," a source says.

A funny thing happens when you tell kids they matter. They believe you.
An alarming 40,000 kids drop out of high school every year. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada are committed to changing that. They provide a safe and supportive place where kids can develop confidence and life skills. They offer programs like Rogers Raising the Grade™ to help kids with their studies. The Club is a place where kids can drop in, so they're less likely to drop out.
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Family

We all have baggage

IT'S ALL RELATIVE
Kathy Buckworth,
kathybuckworth.com

As more airlines impose fees for checked bags, travellers are looking for ways to stuff their carry-on bags full and into overflowing overhead bins. But are you really getting something for free?

The disadvantages to checking a bag is (sometimes) the financial cost, wait times at the baggage carousel or having the bag delayed or lost.

But with a carry-on, downsides include jumping up to wait in line and get on the plane early to secure a bin, (within at least a few rows of your seat) and then hefting a huge bag over your (and others') heads or having to ask

for help to do so.

You're also limited to only 100 millilitres of any liquid (this includes alcohol). Not to mention the jammed in, wrinkled clothes, not having just the right shoes and pulling the suitcase through miles of airport.

And the time you saved? Your checked in pals used it to read an extra chapter, have another glass or visit the washroom in the airport, prior to boarding. Just make sure you consider the real cost, carefully. KATHY BUCKWORTH IS AN AWARD WINNING WRITER. VISIT KATHYBUCKWORTH.COM OR FOLLOW KATHY ON TWITTER @KATHYBUCKWORTH

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metronews.ca

All Mommy wants for Christmas this year is a photo of you with Santa in which you're not crying hysterically. Follow along with the comedic (mis)adventures of mommyhood with Reasons Mommy Drinks online at metronews.ca/voices

Of wish lists, undesirable gifts and handling high expectations

Holiday demands. Christmas is a time of year when it's important to manage your kids' high hopes

MARY SHELL
Metro World News in New York

Your children may have wish lists a mile long, but Denise Schipani, author of Mean Moms Rule: Why Doing the Hard Stuff Now Creates Good Kids Later, says that when it comes to gifts, more stuff under the Christmas tree isn't necessarily more satisfying.

"The holidays can be sensory overload for adults. It can be that way for your child, too," she says.

Feeling overwhelmed at your children's overwhelming holiday demands? It's up to you to manage their expectations. They can't temper themselves in the throes of the holidays.

"My kids still believe in Santa Claus, and they make their lists," she says. But Schipani makes sure her kids understand these are wish lists and not just a rundown of what they'll get. Choosing one thing from the list allows you to surprise your child, she says. "There's a way for them to feel excited about getting stuff without getting greedy about it."

You won't be a Grinch if your child doesn't get everything they desire — not everybody gets everything they want.

"And when your kids ask for something that's too extravagant, Schipani points to a chapter in her book titled: Say 'No.' Smile. Don't Apologize. Repeat as Necessary.

"It's not damaging to say, 'No,'" she reminds.

On the big day, tune in to your kid's experience and how he or she is reacting to unwrapping the gifts. If there's a tantrum or you see your child's eyes glaze over, take note.

"The reason they're doing that might well be that you've overwhelmed them," she says.

And it's equally important to notice when you see your child stop and really engage with a toy. It means you've given your child something he or she really enjoys — a gift that's probably sufficient on its own.

Finally, remember to set a good example for your kids and take opportunities throughout the year to remind them of the great things they already have.

Avoid cultivating a "more is better" attitude, she notes. "Model the behaviour that you want to see."

Your relatives

When you can't control the grandparents...

- **Meaningful gifts.** "There are relatives that are not going to listen, no matter what," Schipani says. But try having a conversation with family members before the holidays. Tell them to consider whether gifts are age-appropriate or whether a combination of quality time and a meaningful gift might be better for your child than an iPod or Xbox."

Pay attention to your kids' reactions as they open gifts. ISTOCK

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Delicious Meatballs & Cranberry Marinara get the party started

These tangy, sweet-and-savory side of these meatballs make for excellent party food.

With a Cranberry Marinara, they're ideal for holiday gathering. And the sauce couldn't be simpler or more festive — tomatoes and cranberry sauce.

Ingredients

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro
- 1 tbsp finely chopped jalapeno slices
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 3 lbs ground beef (93 per cent lean)
- 14-oz can whole berry cranberry sauce
- 15-oz can diced tomatoes
- Splash of hot sauce

1. Heat the oven to 425 F. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, cilantro, jalapenos, garlic, fennel, oregano, onion powder, red pepper flakes, 2 teaspoons of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Whisk until well combined. Add the ground beef, then mix gently until completely blended. Divide the mixture into 50 balls, using about 2 tablespoons of the mixture per ball. Arrange the meatballs on the prepared baking sheet.

3. Place the baking sheet in the oven and bake the meatballs for 20 minutes. Increase heat to broil and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes, or until lightly browned.

4. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the cranberry sauce and diced tomatoes. Bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper, and a splash of hot sauce.

This recipe makes 50 meatballs. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

5. When meatballs are done, arrange on a platter, then spoon the cranberry mixture over them. Serve with toothpicks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Healthy eating

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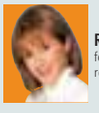

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit rosereisman.com

What better snack to reach for than popcorn when watching those classic Christmas movies? Just watch those popcorn toppings.

Kernel's double-butter popcorn (9 cups)

1,380 calories / 42 g fat / 1,800 mg sodium
Double anything usually indicates a red flag. The butter really increases the calories and fat.

Equivalent

Nine cups of Kernel's double-butter popcorn is equal in fat to 16 Rice Krispie Squares.

Kernel's butter salt popcorn (9 cups)

409 calories / 21 g fat / 352 mg sodium
The butter salt refers more to seasoning than butter amount as reflected in the calories and fat. Sodium is excellent by comparison.

The In-Credibility Factor

Name: Sarah Prevette
City: Toronto
Age: 30
Occupation: Founder and CEO of Sprouter

THE IN-CREDIBILITY FACTOR
Teresa Kruze
life@metronews.ca

Sarah Prevette has been hailed as one of the top entrepreneurs in North America. With her work profiled in the Wall Street Journal and Forbes magazine, Prevette is credited with assisting more than 100,000 start-ups around the world through her online company. Sprouter was acquired by the Post Media Network in 2011, but she still runs the company and has started a new venture called BetaKit that is focused on identifying emerging technology trends for Fortune 500 companies.

I knew I was on my way when ... someone came up to me and told me how Sprouter had affected their life. It was profoundly moving to have someone give credit to something you had built as a reason for their success. The incredible feedback from the community continues to be a motivating factor for all of us. I hope I can look back one day and say I acted on my ambitions and that I left the world a better place.

Leaving a legacy

"I hope I can look back one day and say I acted on my ambitions and that I left the world a better place."

Sarah Prevette
Founder and CEO of Sprouter

Action Plan

Don't isolate yourself
Get out early, get feedback and talk to your potential market.

Adjust your course
Iterate based on feedback from your potential market and understand it's a continuous evolution of your business.

Fall in love with the problem, not the solution.
Be focused on the core issue you are trying to solve. You can always change the solution. Don't get caught up in features and functionality.

Sarah Prevette. PROVIDED

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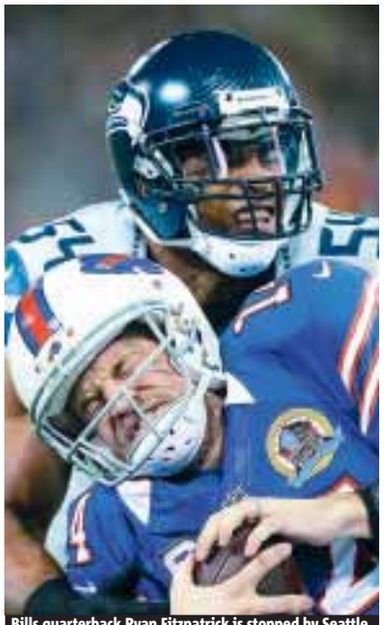
Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, left, beats Bills strong safety George Wilson to the corner for his third touchdown on Sunday in Toronto. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson looks to pass at Rogers Centre. RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES

Korean pop star Psy performs at Sunday's halftime show. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS



Bills quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick is stopped by Seattle Seahawks middle linebacker Bobby Wagner on Sunday at Rogers Centre. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bills' game goes south as NFL comes north

Toronto. Seattle leaves Ontario with lopsided win, officially ending Buffalo's playoff hopes

Rookie Russell Wilson rushed for three TDs and threw for another while Earl Thomas returned an interception 57 yards for a touchdown as the Seattle Seahawks steamrolled past the Buffalo Bills 50-17 on Sunday.

Seattle (9-5), which wore new wolf grey uniforms, earned its fifth win in six games and cemented its first winning season since going 10-6 in 2007.

Russell was certainly a central figure, completing 14-of-23 passes for 205 yards while rushing for 92 yards on nine carries before just 40,770 spectators at Rogers Centre.

Bills in Toronto

50	17
Seahawks	Bills

And it could've been worse for Buffalo as Seattle's Leon Washington had an 86-yard punt return TD late in the third quarter nullified by an illegal block before the replay confirmed Sidney Rice didn't get both feet down on a five-yard touchdown catch in the fourth. Still, the Bills (5-9) were officially eliminated from playoff contention, extending their league-high post-season drought to 13 years.

Marshawn Lynch contributed to Buffalo's woes, rushing for 113 yards and a TD in his first game against his former team since the Bills dealt their 2007 first-round selection to Seattle in 2010.

But it was Wilson who provided the early fireworks at Rogers Centre before a series-low gathering that sported a myriad of NFL team jerseys. The 2012 third-round pick became the first quarterback to register three first-half rushing TDs since September 2000 when Minnesota's Daunte Culpepper did so versus the Chicago Bears.

Buffalo quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick was 21-of-38 passing for 217 yards with two interceptions and a lost fumble. Stevie Johnson had eight catches for 115 yards and a TD while C.J. Spiller added 103 yards rushing with a touchdown.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

By the numbers

+50

Sunday's win marked the second straight lopsided win for the Seahawks, who downed Arizona 58-0 last week.

Lockout

NHLPA vote to dissolve union underway

A critical vote was set to begin Sunday that will determine if the NHL labour battle moves from the negotiating table to the courtroom.

The players are casting their ballots on whether or not to give their executive board the authority to dissolve the NHL Players' Association.

Doing so would allow the board to file a disclaimer of interest, which is a step toward disbanding the union and giving the players the chance to file anti-trust lawsuits against the league.

Two-thirds of the union's membership must vote in favour of the move over a five-day period that ends Thursday, then the union executive board must respond.

The league has already taken some pre-emptive action after it filed a class-action complaint on Friday that asked a federal court in New York to make a declaration on the legality of the lockout.

The NHL also filed an unfair labour practice charge with the U.S. National Labor Relations Board.

The union was quick to respond with a statement on Friday night that suggested the league was overstepping its bounds. At that point, it had yet to even be served with the lawsuit.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr GETTY IMAGES

Cys matter: Jays working on trade for Dickey

According to reports, the Blue Jays have a deal in place to acquire National League Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey from the Mets. Dickey went 20-6 in 2012 with a 2.73 ERA. ALEX TRAUTWIG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

The Blue Jays' rumoured blockbuster acquisition of NL Cy Young Award winner R.A. Dickey seems to have come down to 72 hours of direct negotiation with the player.

After two days of intense talks, the Jays and Mets, according to a Fox Sports report, have an agreement in principle including seven players. The Mets have given Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos until Tuesday at 2 p.m. to talk to the 38-year-old Dickey, who has one year left on his contract, and work out a two-year extension through 2015.

The knuckleballer is rumoured to be going to the Jays along with his personal catcher, Josh Thole, and an unnamed prospect for catchers Travis d'Arnaud and John Buck, pitcher Noah Syndergaard and another prospect.

D'Arnaud and Syndergaard are the No. 1 and No. 3 prospects in the Jays organization, according to MLB.com.

The Jays would likely pull out of any proposed deal if they could not work out the extension with Dickey. At the end of the season, the Mets picked up a club option on the knuckleballer for a very reasonable $5 million, but were looking to lock up the Nashville native for another two seasons. Foiled, they decided to explore a trade.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Upside out the door?

The 23-year-old d'Arnaud was due to arrive in the majors in 2013. He was the 2011 Double-A Eastern League MVP, and was off to a terrific start in Triple-A this year before suffering a torn left knee ligament in June.

- Noah Syndergaard, 20, was one of the Jays' big three pitching prospects at Lansing in the Class-A Midwest League, posting a 2.60 ERA in 103 2/3 innings with 31 walks and 103 strikeouts.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Thinking about what might have been is a complete waste of time. You will always get the chance to do things in the future that make up for what you did, or did not do, in the past. Why worry?

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You are in a can-do mood at the moment and that's good because the planets indicate that if you make an effort, the results will be spectacular. Jupiter in the money area of your chart could make you a fortune!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Anything is possible if you want it enough — yes, anything. Identify what it is you most want to accomplish then just go for it, and ignore those who say you are being irresponsible. What do they know? Nothing!

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If there is something you wanted to finish but for one reason or another failed to see through to the end, don't worry, you'll get another chance. Is it the last chance? Maybe not, but do you want to risk it?

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You can sense that if you want to make changes to your lifestyle you are going to have to make them soon. You have spent enough time thinking and planning, now you must act. It's now or never.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't think about what you intend to do. Just do it and let the situation unfold according to its own momentum. The year is too old to make detailed plans. Just take each day, and moment, as it comes.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Try not to tie yourself down to tasks and chores that can be done at any time. Jupiter in your fellow Air sign of Gemini urges you to be adventurous today. Go some place you have never been to before.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
It might be wise not to get too involved in something your friends are clearly enthused about. Don't worry that you might be missing out. On the contrary, you're making time for more important things.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
It may be a bit too easy to lose your sense of perspective today as mind planet Mercury opposes Jupiter in your opposite sign. Something will annoy you for sure but you don't have to take it seriously.

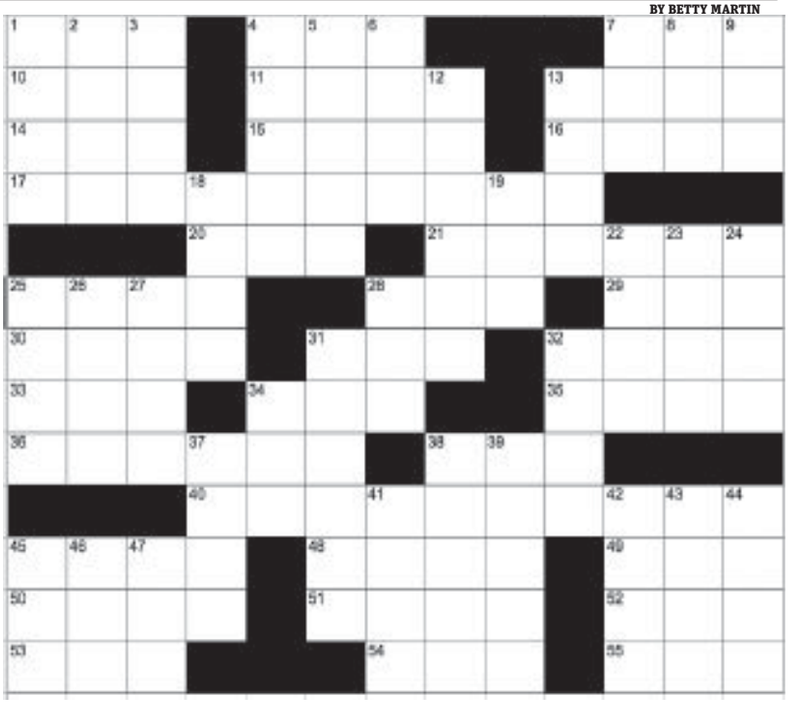
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You should be promoting yourself for all you are worth, not only because you are worth more than your rivals but because you have something valuable to offer. Leave your mark on the world and make it a big one.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You won't lack for courage or confidence today but you must make sure they are well directed. This is the perfect time to take a creative endeavour to a higher level. Believe you can do it and you'll find a way.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If you have promised to do something for a loved one then you must do it — immediately. Yes, of course, you did not realize that other factors would come into play but that's irrelevant. Promises must be kept. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

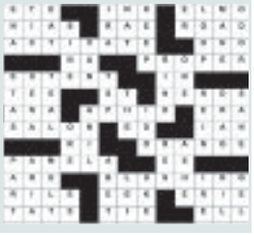
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Droop in the middle
4. Vacation spot
7. School org.
10. Airport listing
11. Fake fanfare
13. Gait
14. Follower (suffix)
15. Strong handsome horse
16. "Panic —"
17. On the up and up
20. Matter, in law
21. Aftershock
25. Take from the top
28. L.A. Law actress Susan —
29. Gardner of Hollywood
30. Zing
31. Nickname for comedian Bill
32. Shut the door forcefully
33. Founded (abbr.)
34. Touch lightly
35. Jazz great Fitzgerald
36. Front runner
38. Dutch city
40. Give a hand to
45. Group
48. Dublin's land
49. The Naked Truth actress Leoni
50. — of Green Gables
51. Squeal
52. Flub
53. To soak
54. Snake sound
55. Unruly crowd

Down
1. Leave port
2. Comic actor Johnson
3. "Little Miss Sunshine" actor Kinnear
4. Aver
5. French capital
6. Sandler or Baldwin
7. In favour of
8. — Close for Comfort
9. Banking machine (abbr.)
12. Wanes
13. "A — Grows in Brooklyn"
18. Take the creases out
19. Attempt
22. Shopping mecca
23. Racetrack shape
24. Hindu deity
25. Rod accompaniment
26. Threat ending
27. Computer input
28. Speck
31. Kind of beetle
32. Grain
34. Vigor
37. Title for Judi Dench
38. Noblemen
39. Some showdowns
41. Perjures
42. Discussion point
43. Roman Emperor
44. Clothing
45. Road surface
46. Compass bearing (abbr.)
47. Picnic pest

Friday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Friday's Sudoku

5	9	1	8	4	2	6	3	7
3	2	6	7	1	5	9	8	4
8	7	4	6	3	9	5	2	1
1	5	7	3	9	6	8	4	2
2	4	9	1	5	8	3	7	6
6	3	8	4	2	7	1	9	5
4	1	2	5	8	3	7	6	9
7	8	5	9	6	4	2	1	3
9	6	3	2	7	1	4	5	8

6			5	1	3			2
					2	7		
	1	2	4			6		
1	8		7		9	3		4
2								9
7		3	8		4		5	6
		5			7	9	6	
		1	2					
8			3	9	5			1

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